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FOOD The year in bites and sips *p. 17*

MUSIC Meet genreless 'weirdos' 26 BATS! *p. 29*

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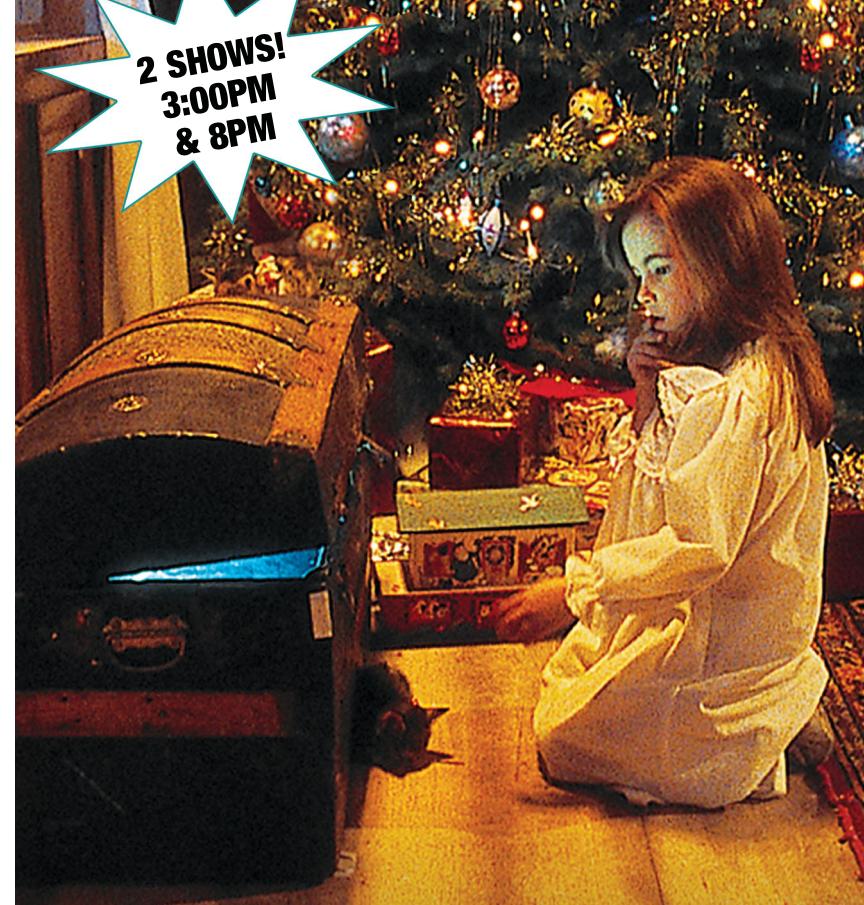
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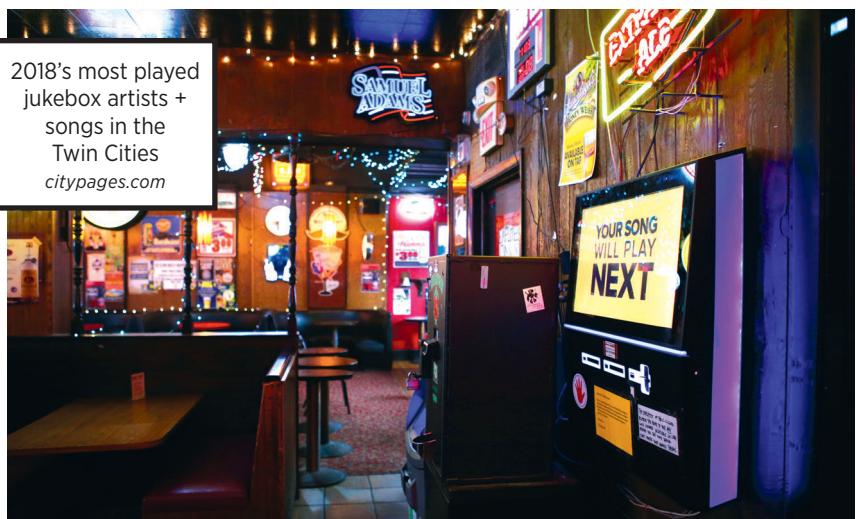
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THE SHORTLIST



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THE STAT SHEET

\$6.6 million

Price paid for the Uptown Arby's site, which will be converted into a 174-unit apartment building

\$425,000

Asking price for Nicole Curtis' last Minneapolis rehab project, a home on Hillside Avenue in north Minneapolis

\$1.2 million

Highest bid for the Soap Factory building, which was sold at a sheriff's auction last week

515

Days Oliver Rodriguez-Ocampo, who was born prematurely, spent at Hennepin Healthcare before finally being released last week

“Media will label you a serial killer, but real folk will call you a hero,’ the notebook read. No. No they won’t.”

Reader Clint Carlson responds to “How a ‘Second American Revolution’ was cut short in rural Minnesota,” at citypages.com.

CHIEF APOLOGISTS

THEY MAY BATHE in his corporate tax cuts. They may pump millions to silence his enablers in Congress. But privately, America's CEOs know Donald Trump is very bad for international business.

A report from Yale shows that some 75 percent of U.S. CEOs have apologized for Trump to their business partners abroad. Eighty-eight percent say his tactics have alienated our allies.

“It is astounding that the nation's first business-leader president is so condemned by the nation's top business leaders due to Trump's dysfunctional negotiating style,” says the dean of the school's Leadership Institute. If only they had the courage to speak about it publicly.

POPULAR STORIES

AT CITYPAGES.COM

Minneapolis boudoir studio reserves right to **DENY SERVICE TO LESBIANS, SEX WORKERS**

Wanna buy **NICOLE CURTIS'** final restored Minneapolis home?

Despite propaganda, Minnesota's **'HIGH TAX' ECONOMY** is crushing Wisconsin, Iowa

Here's every Twin Cities restaurant that **CLOSED IN 2018**

Bonchon in Uptown **APOLOGIZES** for taking employees' tips

JUSTICE, IOWA-STYLE

Confessed pedophile freed due to drunken prosecutor

In September of last year, 22-year-old Dennis Simmerman was charged with having sex with a 13-year-old boy. Police say he admitted to Clark County, Iowa detectives that he'd also traded lewd photos with the kid.

Since police had a confession, it would seem an open-and-shut case. But a year of back-and-forth jousting passed before Simmerman was prepared to plead to a class D felony. Then fate—and a drunken prosecutor—delivered him from his sins.

Enter Clark County Attorney Michelle Rivera, the locale's chief law officer since 2011.

On October 18, a sheriff's deputy saw Rivera in court "slurring her words and stumbling on her feet," and "sat in a chair and swayed her head back and [forth], actions common with being intoxicated," according to the subsequent criminal complaint. But Rivera refused to take a

breathalyzer, so he busted her for public intoxication.

The bigger problem arrived the following day. It had been a year since Simmerman's arraignment, which meant that Rivera had to file an extension in his case, lest she violate his right to a speedy trial.

Rivera never filed that extension. Simmerman's lawyer responded with a motion to dismiss the case. A judge had no choice but to grant it. Dennis Simmerman would walk.

He did spend 15 months in jail. Prosecutors can also attempt to hit him with different charges. But the original charges are now permanently off the table.

Meanwhile, things have not gone well for Rivera. She would plead guilty and pay a \$65 fine for being hammered in court. Yet drunkenness on the job is not a promising quality during campaign season.

In November, she was pounded in her bid for reelection, registering a meager 29



DENNIS SIMMERMANN, LEFT, AND MICHELLE RIVERA (OSCEOLA COUNTY JAIL)

percent of the vote in the Clark County attorney race. And it would keep getting worse.

Two weeks ago, a woman called police, saying a driver had nearly hit her, then ran a stop sign before heading toward the Clark County Courthouse. The car's license plate number brought deputies to Rivera.

According to the cops, the prosecutor tried to blame the scent of alcohol on drinking the night before, and she once again refused a breathalyzer. But she failed a field sobriety test. Worse, deputies discovered she'd dropped her daughter at daycare before heading to work. She was charged with drunk driving and child endangerment. —PETE KOTZ

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The Zimmer Era

You'll miss the Vikings coach when he's gone

He looked a little tired, Mike Zimmer did, as he addressed his squad in the locker room on December 16 after it brutalized the Miami Dolphins.

One week after a humiliating blowout by the Seattle Seahawks, the Vikings returned to their beastly best. Defensive linemen had terrorized poor Ryan Tannehill. On offense, they shoved Miami around as Dalvin Cook bounded over and through Dolphins like a boulder down a steep hill.

Over Zimmer's shoulder was Zygi Wilf, the Vikings'—how to put this nicely?—financially savvy owner. If you enjoy hating the very rich, look up the details of Wilf and his brothers' mafia-esque treatment of their partners in a New Jersey real estate business. Lies were told, deals broken, paperwork falsified, many millions of dollars ripped off. The judge actually used the words "bad faith" and "evil" to describe the Wilfs' behavior.

It'd be pretty weird to trust a guy like that. But there are only 32 head coaching jobs in the NFL, and Mike Zimmer seems to really enjoy the gig.

"We're coming back to work tomorrow," he told his exhausted but giddy team. "I'm fuckin' proud of you guys."

To hear some tell it, Zimmer may have had cause to fear for his job just days earlier. This despite the Vikings' falling one step short of making the Super Bowl last year for the first time since Jimmy Carter's inauguration.

After the season, Zimmer faced a situation unique in the annals of football: His team had three quarterbacks with winning records, and they didn't want any of them.

Zimmer knew the stakes, acknowledging the wrong decision could get him

shitcanned. The coach zigged when he could've zagged, wiping his quarterback roster clean and betting his fate on the goofily genial Kirk Cousins, most recently of Washington, D.C.

Results are mixed: Cousins has connected with teammates, but he's also displayed mediocrity in games the Vikings needed to win. With three games remain-

The coach zigged when he would have zagged, betting his fate on Kirk Cousins.

ing, the team's playoff hopes hung in the balance.

Zimmer's been hounded by critics since he took the job. Sports talk radio, the rude, beer-swilling cousin to conservative talk's straight-up poison, is all about complaining, criticizing, whittling people down, and calling for them to be benched, traded, and fired, all because of what happened... yesterday.

Recency is everything in sports. Within the past three years, Mike Zimmer has lost a playoff game on a fluke (Blair Walsh's missed field goal) and won another (the Minneapolis Miracle). Yet to the talking heads and bards of the game, a tie game against Green Bay or a bad day in Seattle is enough to start a conversation about firing the guy they've got for a coach.

Star Tribune writers Mark Craig, Jim Souhan, and Pat Reusse have all suggested Zimmer's job could be in jeopardy, which seems a bit much. Souhan penned an entire "what if" column suggesting Zimmer would've faced "internal scrutiny" if Stefon Diggs' miracle play hadn't happened last season.

Setting aside the fact that it did indeed happen, this is an awful way to view the business of football: If Mike Zimmer might've been fired for losing a playoff game, what should be done to the 20 coaches who didn't make the postseason? Stocks and pillories?

Those writers aren't alone. Everyone from ESPN's shouter/empty-suit preacher Stephen A. Smith to a radio yokel in Sioux Falls has threatened Zimmer's job, this year and others. Really? Do you run to the kitchen to threaten the chef's job if your burger comes out medium instead of medium rare? Do you heckle your bank teller if they can't figure out how to get the computer to work?

What is it about sport that unleashes our inner lout?

Sports fans are, generally, among the most entitled, least grateful patrons of the arts. Every self-appointed expert is one phone call to a radio station away from solving a team's problems: "Fire everyone, bench the broad-shouldered quarterback, send the good-looking receiver out of town, and replace them with someone better, humbler. Do it by this afternoon! Thanks for having me on. Long-time fan of the show. I'll take my answer off the air."

Grow up, fans. Try having some patience, some awareness, and realize that Mike Zimmer is pretty much an organization's



Mike Mullen

dream. Look how he handled the mad-deniably complicated situations of Adrian Peterson and Everson Griffen, both thought essential to the Vikings' success.

After Peterson admitted to hurting his children as punishment, Zimmer said, "I love this kid," then promptly sat him down all year—perhaps a more useful punishment than if he'd, say, hit Peterson with a stick.

Griffen's time of need came this fall, when a public meltdown had everyone asking if he was fit to play. Zimmer's mind was elsewhere. He saw Griffen's trouble as having "nothing to do with football." Zimmer was concerned for Everson the man, husband, and father, not the maniacal talisman.

I'd ask those garage-dwelling sports fans what they think of Zimmer's handling of the situation—sitting Ev for several games as doctors managed his care—but I really don't care.

I don't know Mike Zimmer, but I trust him. So, quite clearly, do his players. That ought to be enough. Clearly, to some people, it's not.

Here's hoping they someday come to appreciate the coach they have—or had, if their short-sighted wishes are fulfilled. **EP**

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Follow Mike on Twitter: @mikemullen

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ALANNA
MORRIS-VAN TASSEL

In 2017, Alanna Morris-Van Tassel was wrapping up her last season as a company member of TU Dance. Despite the many accolades she had received, she felt lost. "I didn't have a professional family outside of TU Dance. My family doesn't live here, culturally I'm not from here, and it's such a white place," she says. "I felt depleted. I didn't feel that I had a home or knew what home was."

So she took off for Trinidad, her mother's birthplace. There, under the mentorship of choreographer Jamie Philbert, Morris-Van Tassel thrived. She developed "Yam, Potatoe an Fish!," a solo drawn from interviews with her relatives, their migration from the Caribbean to Brooklyn, research into her grandmother's Yoruba-influenced spiritual Baptist faith, and her own ideas about culture, family, and narrative.

This fall, Morris-Van Tassel premiered an excerpt at Movement Research at Judson Church in New York. She also paired her solo with a piece by Jonathan van Arne-man to produce an evening of Caribbean diasporic dance at the Off-Leash Art Box in Minneapolis. A revelation to herself and her parents (who were present), the solo positioned Morris-Van Tassel between the celestial and earthly realms, as faith, family, and cultural history found articulate expression in her bold, beautiful movement vocabulary.

Meanwhile, she was also named one of Dance Magazine's 25 to Watch for 2018. She re-engaged Israeli choreographer Idan Sharabi, who worked with her when she was a 2015 McKnight Dance Fellowship recipient, to create a new work for her. She produced a pre-professional creative-dance program with fellow Juilliard graduate Troy Oglivie (of ThePlayground NYC). She worked on Ashwini Ramaswamy's *Let the Crows Come* (premiering in 2019) in residency at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York. In Morgan Thorson's *Public Love* at the Walker Art Center, Morris-Van Tassel imbued the act of folding clothes with the same elegance and intention that underlay her powerhouse dancing.

How does she feel now? "I spent the last year in conversation with community," she says. "I'm in the second stage of the journey." In January, she's performing "Yam, Potatoe an Fish!" during the Off-set Dance Festival in New York. "This piece has become a family heirloom. It's still unfinished. So where can it go?" Her creative voice will lead her there, back to home. —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

JOHN DWYER

A century is a long time to wait. Dunwoody's architecture school, the first in Minnesota in 100 years, was created five years ago. Founded by citizen architect John Dwyer, the program isn't just any

ARTISTS of the YEAR



Meet the
artists, dancers,
architects, and
comics who
stood out
and made a
difference in

2018

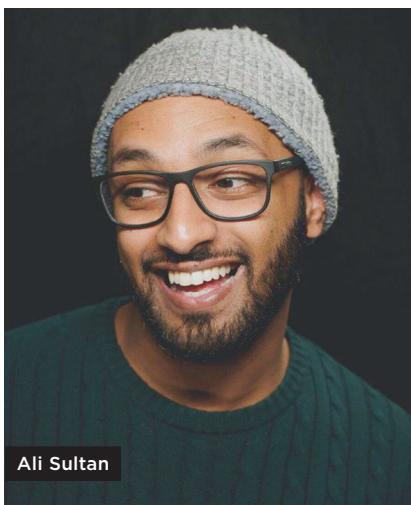
Alanna Morris-Van
Tassel photographed
by Bobby Rogers



John Dwyer



Phil Hansen



Ali Sultan

COURTESY PHOTO

architecture school. Its focus is “global practice,” Dwyer explains, “the next evolution of public interest design, which is doing work for underserved communities.”

The idea was sparked when Dwyer, then with Shelter Architecture, traveled to New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina with a group of U of M students to help rebuild households. He also established a community design studio in the Lower Ninth

Ward. Next, he initiated the Dunwoody program and took those students to Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria.

Don’t confuse Dwyer with a great white hope swooping in to save the locals. “We don’t go in with any ideas,” he says. “We lead with our ears. We respond to what we hear with whatever resources necessary—damage assessments, data, design, information, supplies—in order to help make communities self-reliant.”

He admits 2018 had a rough start. The Dunwoody program keeps growing up to 40 percent every year. “The school grew so fast that I lost control of it,” he says, “but then I made some changes in the spring and some superb faculty stepped up in administrative roles, so I was able to start managing the growth.”

Thanks to his long-term effective volunteerism as a citizen architect, his desire to raise design’s public profile, and his efforts to make architecture accessible to all, Dwyer was given the 2018 AIA MN Louis Lundgren Award for Service.

These days, he has nine projects underway in Puerto Rico, received the green light from the city of Minneapolis for a low-carbon

footprint/multi-family residence on Washington Avenue, and has students working on a community center for Frogtown Farms, a cultural center in Jamaica, and a Syrian refugee camp in Lebanon.

“The way I manage all of this is, well, I don’t have any kids,” he says, laughing. “Or you could say I have 120 kids. We have this amazing, crazy practice at Dunwoody.”

—CAMILLE LEFEVRE

PHIL HANSEN

“Art is important, but I just want to continue to make things,” says Phil Hansen.

Hansen’s artistic journey began in high school, where a focus in pointillism (art composed entirely of dots) led him to pursue art school with hopes of making it his livelihood. Unfortunately, it caused permanent nerve damage, forcing him to drop out.

“When I was diagnosed with nerve damage, I began to set limitations for myself,” Hansen says. “Limitations can drive creativity.”

When a neurologist encouraged Hansen to “embrace the shake” and explore other forms of art, he did. This year, his creations have included a massive three-dimensional skull chair and a painting of Snoop Dogg made entirely from gin and juice.

He also received international praise for his project *When I Was 7*, a collection of more than 600 stories from people recalling their most vivid memories from that age. He took each of these tales and wrote them out, forming a portrait of the person who inspired the project: a young girl who live-tweeted her war experience from Aleppo.

And then, he destroyed it.

Hansen has turned destruction into an art form; his *Goodbye Art* series documents the breakdown of all of his creations.

“Experiences are short-lived, but the memories last,” he explains of the process.

Hansen is focused on creating new works in 2019. As for what those works will be, he has only one goal.

“I want to make things because I want to,” he says. “If I’m motivated and inspired and enjoy it, I’m going to create it, no matter what anyone else thinks.”

ALI SULTAN

When Ali Sultan began doing comedy, his biggest challenge was finding his own authentic voice.

“Authenticity takes a lot of time in standup comedy,” he explains. “Even now it’s an endless effort to maintain and express who you are. But I think I’m a lot more authentic than when I started, because I base my jokes in truth.”

That commitment has paid off, as Sultan has seen himself grow both professionally and artistically in 2018. Aside from being a regular fixture at Acme Comedy Co. and House of Comedy, Sultan was able to build on his already big 2017, which included his

TV debut as part of Kevin Hart’s *Hart of the City*, for an even bigger 2018. This year he made an appearance on Wanda Sykes’ new show, *Unprotected Sets*, hosted a successful podcast alongside his mother, and introduced a comedy showcase, People of Comedy, focused on highlighting comedians of all backgrounds.

“I’m very hopeful about our comedy scene,” he explains. “One thing that I had a problem with in comedy in general is the fact that it’s very segregated. You have your black rooms and the main rooms, so I created [People of Comedy] so we can all become one scene.”

While he has been building his own reputation locally, the most incredible accomplishment for Sultan this year was an invitation to film a half-hour special for Comedy Central in Dubai. That experience not only shaped his comedy, but his outlook on the future.

“I realized that this is all I want to do, and the clarity I got from being away made me realize that time is important,” he says. “I was also inspired to write jokes in Arabic. I did my half-hour in English, but Arabic is so rich and there are so many topics I can explore.”

While his career prospects for 2019 are promising, the most important piece of the New Year for Sultan will be to continue exploring his constantly evolving sets.

“I share a lot of personal stories, and within those stories you get my perspective of the world. That perspective comes from living in Yemen, Ethiopia, and America, and managing to be an outsider in all of those places. I am expressing my individuality but I am not denying those cultural elements that shape me. It’s very tricky to do, but I think I do a decent job at it.”

—PATRICK STRAIT

MOLLY DIERS

When carpenter Molly Diers began typing a Facebook update on January 16, her intention was just to let her friends know what was going on in her life, not to create a viral post that would draw widespread attention to what she called “an intolerable environment” in the Guthrie Theater’s scene shop.

“A friend was like, ‘This is upsetting. Can you change the privacy settings? I want to share it.’” Looking back now, Diers remembers that “it just snowballed, so that was shocking to me. I’m not sad that happened, because I’m glad that the public cared.”

The post contained the news that Diers was resigning from the Guthrie to escape what she called the “sexist culture” of the scene shop. A male colleague, Nate Saul, also resigned; both Diers and Saul had applied for a supervisory position that was filled by a candidate they did not believe would improve the shop culture.

Diers filed complaints via her union and via the Minneapolis Department of Civil

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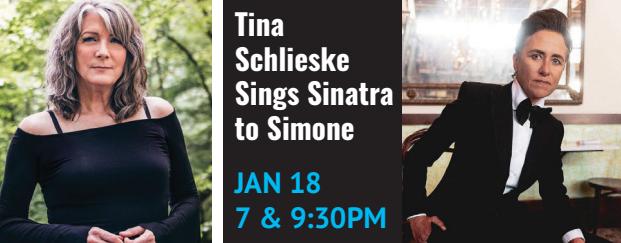
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An Evening
with Kathy
Mattea
JAN 17
7 & 9PM



Tina
Schlieske
Sings Sinatra
to Simone
JAN 18
7 & 9:30PM



Rebirth
Brass Band
JAN 19
7 & 9:30PM



BRUNCH WITH
Rebirth
Brass Band
JAN 20
11AM



Fred Steele
and Nachito
Herrera
JAN 21
7PM



True Blues w/
Corey Harris
and Cedric
Watson
JAN 23
7PM



Sweet
Honey in the Rock
JAN 24
7PM



SWEET HONEY IN THE
ROCK
JAN 25-26
7PM



Banda
Magda
JAN 30
7PM



Laurence
Juber &
Martin
Taylor
JAN 31
7PM



Molly Diers



Rights, and the Guthrie subsequently conducted an internal investigation. The city found in the Guthrie's favor, and an arbitrator found that though Diers and Saul were qualified for the supervisor position, hiring the outside candidate was not retaliatory or discriminatory. A National Labor Relations Board charge is still pending.

"The Guthrie has consistently denied claims of gender discrimination, retaliation, and a hostile work environment, and we're gratified that the findings from the city of Minneapolis and the arbitration found no merit to those claims and issued rulings in favor of the Guthrie," says artistic director Joseph Haj. "Equity, diversity, and inclusion is a Guthrie core value, and like artistic excellence, it is something we must continually strive toward."

"Hopefully it opened their eyes," Diers says about the internal investigation. She says she's open to returning, but though the Guthrie has said she's welcome to apply to future job postings, she doesn't expect she'll be hired back. She's currently working for a company called KidZibits, building museum exhibits.

Diers' story has focused local and national attention not just on the particulars of the Guthrie's backstage culture, but on the importance of elevating women's voices in the theater spaces that audience members don't see. Diers says that before she quit, she began speaking up internally because, in the unusual position of being a female full-time scene shop worker, she felt it was her responsibility.

"When I continued to speak up and nothing was getting better, I just decided I couldn't be there any more. It was really frustrating and sad, but leaving also gave me the opportunity to be more vocal. I think that's been a good thing." She says, "It's important to listen to women. It's not just about me." —JAY GABLER

JOY DOLO

Joy Dolo is no stranger to local stages, with an acting career that stretches back to her arrival in the Twin Cities in 2009.



Joy Dolo

TOP: STAR TRIBUNE, BOTTOM: BONNI ALLEN

This year, though, has been something special... perhaps a breakthrough? "I do feel like I have broken something," she laughs.

In one recent role after another, Dolo has wowed. Last year she took a part originally written for a 45-year-old white man in the Jungle Theater's *Fly By Night*, and all but stole the show with her engaging performance. This year, she became the gripping center of the Moving Company's *The 4 Seasons*. Without even getting out of an onstage bed, she delivered a devastating performance as a wronged mother who's ready for revenge in Mixed Blood Theatre's *Is God Is*.

"To have so many powerful, unapologetic, creative, black women in one room creating together was incredible," she says about the process of working on the latter show with director Nataki Garrett. "I learned a lot about myself and how I see myself as a woman in this environment."

Oh, and Dolo is hilarious. As an improv performer, she's helped the Theater of Public Policy become a wildly entertaining intersection of goofy improv and substantive discussion. That's also true of Blackout Improv. Co-founder Dolo has seen the all-black improv group become a top local draw and attract international attention.

"We wanted to create a place where black people could feel joy," she says. "Unash-

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Becca Hart



Essma Imady



Luis Fitch

COURTESY THE ARTIST, BASHAR SHEHADEH, RIK SFERRA

edly. A place where we could talk about how we really feel about topics, good or bad, and to show that we are three-dimensional human beings."

One of Dolo's latest ventures is a podcast from American Public Media's *Brains On*. (Disclosure: I work at the Current, a service of the same parent company.) *Forever Ago* is a history show for kids and adults, with Dolo helping to explain everything from skateboards to sandwiches. "I have a kid co-host in every episode, and it's my job to get them to chat," she says, "which is intimidating! I think it's important that the kids see an adult that is allowing space for silliness so they have permission to be silly as well."

On deck for this spring: a new spin on Gandalf in the Children's Theatre Company's *The Hobbit*. "I'm going to play Gandalf as Oprah, so get ready," she says. "You get an adventure, and you get an adventure, and...!" —JAY GABLER

BECCA HART

Practically perfect in every way? That's just part of the job description when you're playing Mary Poppins. As with her other memorable performances this year, Becca Hart drew on her background in physical theater to play the ultimate nanny for Artistry's production of the Disney musical.

"It really makes me start from the character at a place of entire-body immersion," she says. "How does this person stand? How does this person feel in their own body?"

Before this year, regular theatergoers likely recognized Hart's face—she'd made a series of winning turns in shows like the Jungle's *Miss Bennet*—but in 2018, she became an essential rising star. In addition to *Poppins*, Hart ran away with Shoot the Glass Theater's *Into the Woods* in the role of Cinderella; and starred as the stormy #7 in the Jungle's wildly acclaimed production of *The Wolves*.

She'll return to that role when the show is remounted later this winter at the Southern

Theater. "We've all been getting together and running lines for the past couple months, and it's kind of crazy how even more in sync the whole cast is," Hart says.

Hart grew up in Oklahoma, but her parents were both from St. Paul. "We would come up every summer and every winter," she remembers. "When I was looking at colleges, I really wanted to come up here, not knowing it had one of the top three theater scenes in the entire country."

As if her busy acting schedule wasn't enough, Hart is also the area's only cartoon-format theater critic. Her exuberant pieces for Minnesota Playlist capture the visual spirit of productions in a way that conventional reviews can't.

"People remember it," she says, and she's discovered that actors love to see themselves represented in cartoon form. "That's something kind of special: to see yourself represented in that way; to see that you had that much of an impact on someone in the audience."

Fairy-tale princesses, troubled teens, poised musical leads: Hart can do it all, and she says she's happy not to be pigeonholed. "Sometimes I'll be called in to audition for the ingenue, and then they don't cast me as the ingenue, but I get to play the villain. It's really fun to see all those shades of humanity." —JAY GABLER

ESSMA IMADY

How does an artist stay away from politics when their very existence has been politicized by outside forces? The answer is they don't. At least, that's the case for Essma Imady, whose work bravely tackles sociopolitical contexts with complexity and beauty.

"Our choice is a culmination of our upbringing and circumstance," she says. "These are topics in my life circumstance, and the way I think about things has led me."

Often, she chooses particularly tricky themes for her pieces because art is a good method of investigation. Last spring, Imady

put together an incredible solo show at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. Called "Thicker Than Water," the exhibition dealt with the refugee experience from the perspectives of parents and children. Imady employed interviews she had conducted with young Syrian refugees, as well as objects related to children such as stuffed animals and plush blankets. Her works were unsettling in their intimacy, and the juxtaposition of violence and family life held a powerful weight.

Last August, Imady stepped into the role of curator, pairing artists affected by the travel ban with local creatives. Presented by MNArtists at the Walker Art Center, the resulting collaborations boasted a number of inspired pieces. A gorgeous dance installation by Palestinian American Leila Awadallah, who is based in the Twin Cities, and Asma Ghanem, a Syrian sound artist and photographer based in Paris, was particularly special. In that work, visitors listened to Ghanem's sound creations through earphones while watching Awadallah's haunting movements outside through the Walker's windows.

Whether she's creating art or curating, Imady says collaboration is deeply important to her. "Art is a beautiful way to ask others for help in thinking about things and exploring topics," Imady says. She sees collaboration as extending even to the audience that engages with the work. "You present your half of the story," Imady says. "It's never complete until they experience the work. That is as important as making the work itself."

Besides her two shows at Mia and the Walker, Imady also received an Arti(sts) on the Verge fellowship through Northern Lights, which will come to fruition next year. Meanwhile, she's hard at work on a graphic novel. —SHEILA REGAN

LUIS FITCH

La Doña, a Latino fusion microbrewery, music venue, gallery, and food truck stop, burst onto the scene this fall to much fan-

fare. And at least some of their success must be attributed to Luis Fitch, co-founder and creative director of the crosscultural design agency Uno Branding.

By designing striking Dia de los Muertos-inspired imagery that's slick, bright, and a little bit subversive, Fitch has helped create through branding a place that makes you feel that you're part of something special.

For Fitch, the distinctions between fine art and commercial work aren't particularly meaningful. As an entrepreneur, he brings his creativity and vision to commercial projects, but he's also well versed in the worlds of public art, galleries, and museums.

"I used to be criticized by my fine arts friends for making money," he says. "But that's exactly what I want: I want to make money."

Growing up in Tijuana, Fitch didn't have many opportunities to study fine art in high school. But by the time he had made his way to an art program in California, he already had a strong background in design, and it has grounded his work throughout his schooling and career.

"Nowadays I'm really interested in the intersection of creativity between gallery art, urban art, museum work, and commercial work," Fitch says. "I'm most interested in creating things that can go in different channels."

In addition to commercial projects through Uno—which boasts clients including the Minnesota Lottery, nonprofit organizations, small businesses, and international corporations—Fitch also shows his work in traditional arts spaces like the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, Gamut Gallery in downtown Minneapolis, and at art pop-ups around town. —SHEILA REGAN

KELLY KADUCE

In the Minnesota Opera's standout production of *Thaïs* last spring, Minnesota native Kelly Kaduce sang the title role of an Egyptian courtesan whose overwhelming charisma holds a city captive and threatens



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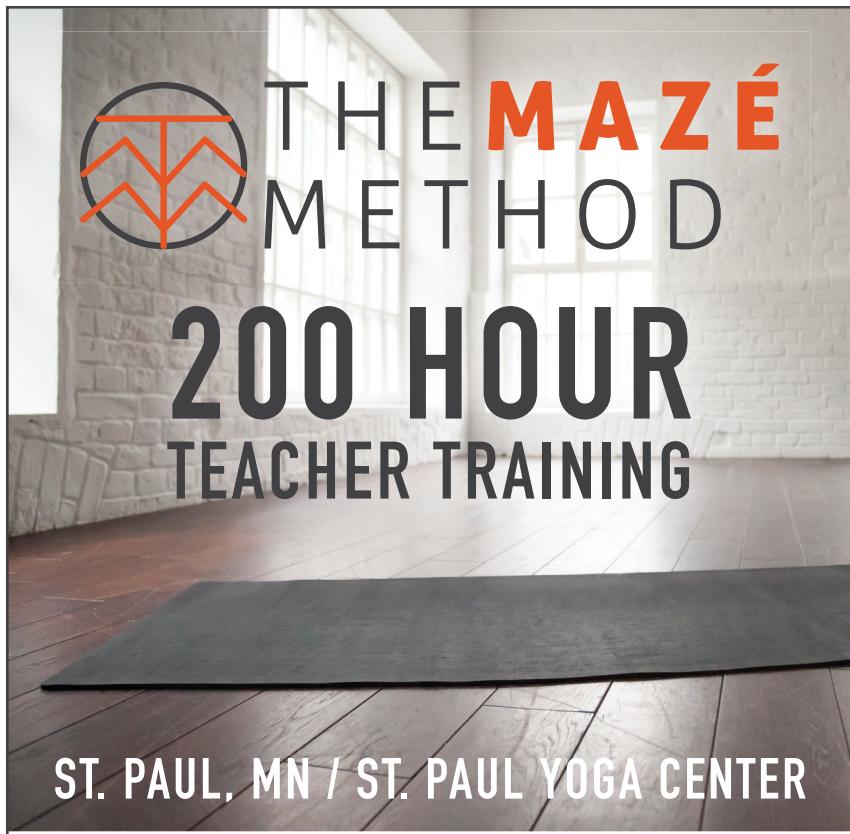


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Kelly Kaduce

CORY WEAVER

to break the faith of the Cenobite monk sent to reform her.

When we spoke to her earlier this year, she got tangled up in modesty trying to describe why she was cast as an audacious character who is un-Midwestern in just about every sense of the word.

"I will not tell you that I'm beautiful, but, *from a distance*," she said, leaning hard on the emphasis, "I can be made up to be quite beautiful. If you can find someone who has a decent figure from a distance, that's the kind of person you want to cast for a character known for their beauty and sexuality."

Regionally mandated humility aside, Kaduce is perfect for the challenging role, as the Minnesota Opera's 2017/18 season closer proved. It's not just that her powerful vocal range allows her to hit the opera's notoriously difficult high-G note. The character of Thaïs requires serious acting chops. For the story to work, the audience must find it plausible that Thaïs conveys such gravity that all are helpless in her orbit.

Such was the case in this May's lavish production of composer Jules Massenet's oft-overlooked classic. Even the gorgeous final act, when Thaïs is humbled and repentant, paled a little compared to the thrill of seeing the character—and Kaduce—at the height of her powers in the earlier arias.

The locally grown soprano has received national acclaim, but some of her most notable work has come from the stage at St. Paul's Ordway Theater. That includes her performance in the Minnesota Opera's 2016 world-premiere adaptation of Stephen King's *The Shining*, where she originated the role of Wendy Torrance.

"I love doing new works," Kaduce says. "With a world premiere, not only are you tasked with learning a new role, but you often also must learn a new style if you are working with a new composer... With reinterpreting a role, you have more to work with up front with regards to how the piece has been performed. That's a different element to think about that new opera doesn't have."

Originating a role or putting her own spin on a classic—either way, it's a joy to listen to Kaduce sing whatever she pleases.

—BRYAN MILLER



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BY HANNAH SAYLE

The year was 2018. The world felt...very weird. Was it careening toward disaster? Almost definitely! Yet we found time to eat, drink, and be merry. Here are all the ways we stuffed our faces and filled our bellies when just about everything else seemed impossible to digest.

We got smoke in our eyes.

Smoking cigarettes ain't cool (hear that, kiddos?), but smoking just about anything in the kitchen is: meats, vegetables, pizzas, bagels—hell, even cocktails. Between new restaurants with wood-fired grills (Popol Vuh, Colita, Meyvn, In Bloom) and new barbecue joints (Animales Barbeque Co., Hwy 10 BBQ, and the soon to come Minnesota BBQ Co. and Beast BBQ), we pledged our allegiance to smoky flavors and charred edges. We'll miss StormKing and Rudolph's, which shuttered this year, but their spirit lives on in billowing chimneys across the Twin Cities.

Vegans took over!

This was a big year for the herbivores among us. Fig + Farro, a vegetarian and vegan spot, opened at Lake and Hennepin. Trio Plant-Based opened down the street in Lyn-Lake. Seed Cafe, another cruelty-free kitchen, opened on West Lake Street just beyond Bde Maka Ska; Vegan East's dairy- and egg-free bakery opened in the Whittier neighborhood. In St. Paul, Eureka Compass launched a vegan bodega within its existing restaurant. And vegan kitchens Reverie and J. Selby's launched their own food trucks. Plus, the faux-meat makers at Herbivorous Butcher have expanded their stronghold—you can find their meat-like marvels in restaurants from coast to coast.

A bunch of restaurants forded the river.

Following in the footsteps of Kyatchi and Revival, which both opened sister locations in St. Paul in the last few years, a number of popular eateries bopped on over to try life on the other side of the Mississippi. Red Rabbit, Parlour, Nico's Taco Bar, Ramen Kazama, Rose Street Patisserie, Birch's on the Lake, and Salty Tart all opened in the saintly city.

Empires expanded.

After adding Book Club to her list of restaurants in late 2017, mini-mogul Kim Bartmann launched another venture in 2018: Trapeze, a champagne and bubbly bar next to Bar-



LUCY HAWTHORNE

bette. Meanwhile, Ann Kim (Young Joni, Pizzeria Lola, Hello Pizza) announced she was taking over the former Lucia's space to sling tacos. Another treasured venue was saved when Sameh Wadi's Milkjam took over the beloved Dave's Popcorn stand in south Minneapolis—plus the chef introduced his St. Paul seafood boil, Grand Catch. And Gavin Kaysen, chef extraordinaire of Spoon and Stable and Bellecour, revealed his plans for a third restaurant, a tasting-menu spot in the North Loop called Demi.

There was a Latinx-plosion.

After knocking us out with Martina in 2017, Daniel Del Prado wowed us again with Colita, a cozy south Minneapolis spot featuring upscale Tex-Oaxacan fare. In the same vein, Popol Vuh, the fancy twin sister to taco joint Centro in Northeast, opened to rave reviews for its elevated Mexican cuisine. Minneapolis got its first Latin-influenced craft brewery, La Doña Cervecería, and this fall, Boludo opened in the Kingfield neighborhood, serving buttery, flaky empanadas and churro doughnuts.

Southern food made its way to the frozen north.

It was a good year for the classic Southern meat-and-three: 2018 saw Funky Grits and Mama Sheila's Soul Food Kitchen open up mere blocks from each other in south Min-

neapolis, and Mama D's Kitchen nabbed a booth in Midtown Global Market. Meanwhile, the pop-up favorite Soul Bowl (a build-your-own soul food experience) is hunting for a permanent location.

We expanded our culinary horizons.

In addition to Southern food getting its due, a number of new cuisines and fusions landed in the Twin Cities in 2018. The Viet Cajun trend of spicy seafood boils with east Asian flavors has been well represented in Viet Cajun & Noodles in Woodbury, Grand Catch in St. Paul's Mac-Groveland neighborhood, and Cajun Life on the east side of St. Paul. Meyvn brought us an array of dishes from the Jewish diaspora, including bagels and lox, pierogi, pastrami, and shakshouka. A little further south in Minneapolis, Apoy opened as one of the only full-service Filipino restaurants in the Twin Cities, and Mi Casa Su Casa, which also opened this year, offers Mexican-Pinoy cuisine, a fusion that nods to the Southeast Asian islands' Hispanic influence.

Food halls continued to be a thing.

Though the prototype Food Building in northeast Minneapolis has had some struggles (it lost Lone Grazer Creamery in 2017 and Draft Horse this month), the year showed a healthy appetite for food courts and food halls. Following the successful 2017 launch of Market House Collaborative in

Lowertown, St. Paul's Keg & Case Market was one of the biggest openings of the year, an expansive home to Bogart's Doughnuts, Sweet Science Ice Cream, In Bloom, Five Watt Coffee, Rose Street Patisserie—the list goes on. Others were eager to cash in on the trend, including an elevated food court in Roseville's Rosedale Center, Revolution Hall, and Target Center's desperately edgy Cargo Food Authority, a concessions hall with "graffiti-tagged" shipping containers. More are on the way: Malcolm Yards Market near Surly Brewing is slated for a 2020 opening, Graze Food Hall in the North Loop has gotten the green light from the city, and Dayton's Food Hall & Market on Nicollet Mall is eyeing a 2019 premiere.

Our love affair with street food endured.

If you thought our obsession with the nebulous concept of "street food" had run its course, you were mistaken. We're still entranced by the idea of finding something truly authentic, a taste that you would otherwise only get when strolling through some faraway city. Thai Street Market in St. Paul brings us the classic Thai street foods of curries, satay, and soups; Sweet Chow in the North Loop does a mix of Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian, and Korean street foods (think banh mi, sausages, larb, and chicken wings); and Hamburguesas El Gordo (which opened a Minneapolis location in 2018) brings us tacos, loaded hamburgers, hot dogs, and little baggies of salsa, a hallmark of eating on the go in Mexico.

We lost some old friends.

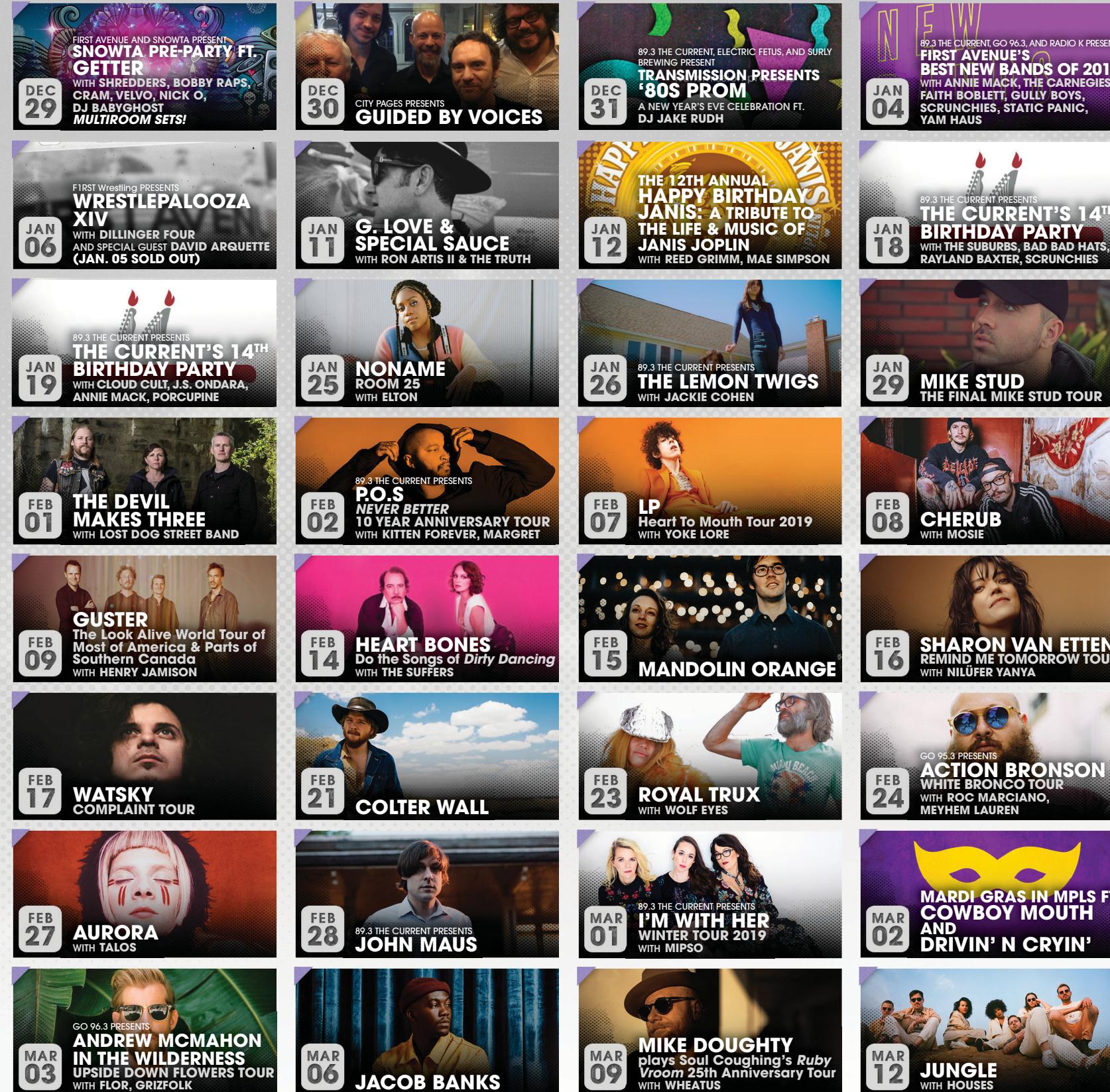
It wasn't all good eats and happy news in 2018; it never is. After a two-year effort at reviving the Viking Bar, the classic closed again. St. Paul's Wild Onion and Muddy Pig served their last pints. Legends, Fabulous Fern's, and Grumpy's Downtown all claimed their big bar stools in the sky. Lotus made a valiant return to Uptown, but couldn't stick it out. 510 Lounge in the former La Belle Vie space lasted only six months; La Belle Vie alum Jim Christiansen was forced to close his much-lauded Heyday. Rabbit Hole, that funky fun restaurant next to the Midtown Global Market, made its last poutine.

We're not sure what we'll do without the comforts of Ward 6 and its boozy milkshakes or the reliable pick-me-up of doughnuts from Chef Shack Ranch. Unfortunately, the list goes on (B'Witched, Heirloom, the Minneapolis Colossal Cafe, GYST, the Uptown Arby's, for chrissakes!), but we'll pour one out for our old friends and toast the new ones to come in 2019. Skol! ☕

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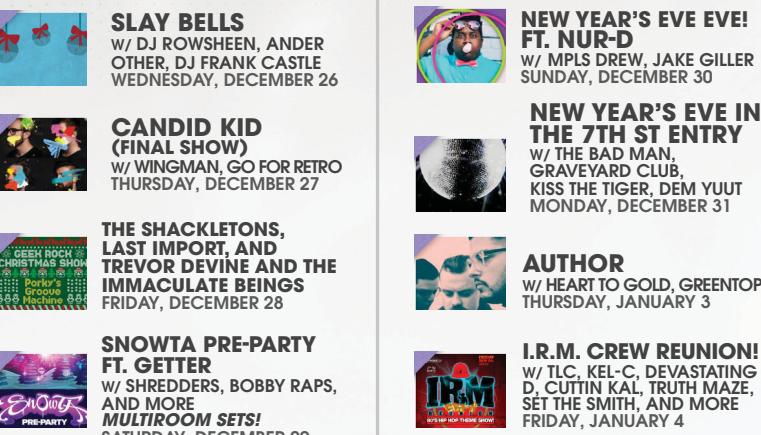
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A LIST

SATURDAY Forever Young parties at the Turf **p. 21**

SUNDAY A *Lord of the Rings* marathon **p. 21**

MONDAY Stuff to do on New Year's Eve **p. 22**

Flip Phone parties with the Spice Girls this New Year's Eve.



DARIN KAMNETZ

WEDNESDAY 12.26

COMEDY

CARMEN LYNCH

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Comedy sometimes takes you to unusual places. Just ask comedian Carmen Lynch. "I just got back from Greenland and the Bahamas on a military tour," she says. "It was hard to pack." Greenland was dark the

whole time. "There was no sun when we went. They don't get sun until February, so even in the middle of the day it was pitch dark outside and it was very cold. When you land, they give you a little lecture on what to do if you see a polar bear, which is what keeps it exciting." Lynch describes her current set as dark and sarcastic. "It's kind of autobiographical—my thoughts about anything from family to observational things." She's currently fascinated by

ghosts, even though she's never seen one and is not a believer. "I like to talk a lot about religion, too," she adds. "I've always been curious about it. I grew up Catholic, but I don't go to church. Whatever I want to talk about, I try not to hold back." 18+. 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday** —P.F. WILSON

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EDDIE IFFT

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

"I got this thing called Bell's palsy, and it proves there's a God, because it paralyzes half your face," comedian Eddie Ifft tells an audience. "He's got a really dark sense of humor if he paralyzes your whole face, but he does half and you're like, 'What the fuck?'" He went to the hospital thinking he was having a stroke. The doctors explained to his wife that he had Bell's palsy. When asked why half his face was drooping, they explained to her that half of his face was frozen, and the part she thought was drooping was normal. "So she asked them, 'Can you make the frozen half the normal half? Because that looks good.'" It turns out Bell's palsy is caused by a herpes virus. "My wife," Ifft continues, "yells in the middle of the hospital, 'You gave me fucking herpes?'" But it's not the so-called bad herpes; it's the one related to the chicken pox. Going to sleep that night, and having to tape his one eye shut, Ifft thought to himself, "I think I'd rather have the bad herpes." 16+. 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday through Monday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday; 10 p.m. Monday. \$20. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Monday** —P.F. WILSON

FRIDAY 12.28

COMEDY

FUCK 2018

TURF CLUB

This year wasn't the best. Was it the shootings, bombings, celebrity deaths, or kids eating Tide pods that made it suck? All of the above? Honestly, we have a lot to choose from. Fortunately, comedian Rana May is sending off 2018 with a swift kick to the teeth at her very special roast of everything that happened this past year. Joining her will be the Beach Party comedy crew, composed of Helena Balciak, Tommy Bayer, and Zachary Kagan, along with

Devohn Bland, Ashli Henderson, and Shelly Paul. Together, we'll be able to comfort each other over the loss of Avicii, the rise of Brett Kavanaugh, and the Kanye West train wreck. There are two shows to allow for maximum grieving; they'll probably need extra time allotted to really dive deep into "let's film a dead body in the woods!" YouTuber Logan Paul. 7 and 9:30 p.m. \$15. Turf Club, 1601 University Ave. W., St. Paul; 651-647-0486. —PATRICK STRAIT

FAMILY

GLOW IN THE DARK SLEDDING PARTY

ST. PAUL PARK CITY HALL

Now in its third year, this glow-in-the-dark sledding event turns a park into a kid-friendly disco-party, complete with fancy lights, projected images, and a plethora of glow sticks to light the way. Taking place on the hill behind City Hall, this St. Paul get-together includes free refreshments, pizza sold by the slice, and a bonfire. Whether you are a kid or a kid at heart, this is a great chance to join in the fun, add a little light to your life, and get to know your neighbors. 5 to 7 p.m. Free. 600 Portland Ave., St. Paul. —SHEILA REGAN

SATURDAY 12.29

DANCE

FOREVER YOUNG PRESENTS: ELECTRIC FEEL

TURF CLUB

Next week kicks off with New Year's Eve. But that doesn't mean you have to rest up this weekend. Forever Young gets it. This Saturday, the dance-night crew will help you burn off extra energy with a party at the Turf. Tonight, we will revel in the '00s, an era where indie rock and electronic music played back-to-back on the radio. Think LCD Soundsystem, Bloc Party, Vampire Weekend, Modest Mouse, and the Strokes. DJs FooLPooF and Garrison Grouse will spin tunes from these groups and more. 21+. 9 p.m. \$7/\$10 at the door. 1601 University Ave. W., St. Paul; 651-647-0486. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

SUNDAY 12.30

FILM

LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY

RIVERVIEW THEATER

It's been 15 years since *Return of the King* was released, capping off the original *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. While dedicated fans likely have the 4K Ultra HD box set (in addition to a wizard's staff, the *LOTR*-themed Risk game, and countless other collectibles), there's only one time of year to catch



MINDY TUCKER

SUNDAY

COMEDY

LIZZ WINSTEAD: I REALLY DON'T CARAVAN, DO YOU?

THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

It's difficult to imagine many fond memories having been forged in 2018 amid the deceptions of the Trump administration, worsening environmental catastrophes, and our deeply ingrained cultural malaise. But rather than falling into catatonic despondency, homegrown comic Lizz Winstead offers a restorative perspective with *I Really Don't Caravan, Do You?* Winstead's annual year-end summation showcases an exceptional ability to find humor in even the most troubling events, a strength that most famously led to her co-creation of *The Daily Show*. Unlike entertainers who see the stage as a venue for escapism, Winstead hearkens back to a bolder tradition of using comedy as a means to confront uncomfortable realities. She'll have no shortage of debacles to draw upon as she, accompanied by musical guest Sam Breckenridge, lampoons the numerous absurdities that defined 2018. 2 p.m. Sunday; 7:30 p.m. Sunday and Monday. \$45/\$55 at the door; \$65 VIP. 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674. **Through Monday** —BRAD RICHASON

all 730 minutes on the big screen in Minneapolis. The annual Riverview Theater trilogy event starts at 10:45 a.m. and runs through a full day, pausing for breaks between extended-version screenings of each film. Put on a costume (there will be a contest for the best looks), get out of the cold, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ▶

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A-LIST

**Ring in 2019
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puppets
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COURTESY OF TIPSY KANGAROO

CONTINUED FROM SUNDAY ▶

escape to a fantasy world for a day. 10:45 a.m., 2:45 p.m., 7 p.m. \$12/\$15 at the door. 3800 42nd Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-729-7369. —LOREN GREEN

MONDAY 12.31

COMEDY/NYE

6TH ANNUAL EAST COAST STYLE NEW YEAR'S EVE COMEDY SHOW

SISYPHUS BREWING

If you want to laugh, celebrate, and be home for a reasonable bedtime, Maggie Faris has your back. Faris will once again host her insanely popular East Coast Style Comedy Show at Sisyphus this New Year's Eve, alongside comedians Julie Bane and Mohtasham Yaqub. Regardless of whether you hit the early show or the "late" show (it's at nine, so even that is perfect for sleep enthusiasts), you'll get to experience the full-blown New Year's hoopla on the East Coast clock. There are also booby prizes, which have become a staple of Maggie Faris comedy blowouts, and you'll be home in time to relieve your babysitter before the primetime New Year's Eve rates kick in. Find tickets and more info at www.eventbrite.com. 7 and 9 p.m. \$25. 712 Ontario Ave. W., Minneapolis; 612-321-8324. —PATRICK STRAIT

NYE/PARTY

CAPITAL CITY: A NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

CAN CAN WONDERLAND

Can Can Wonderland is a great place to go for special occasions. With artist-

designed mini golf, vintage arcade machines, whimsical decor, and fancy cocktails, it has the makings of a party—even on a "normal" night. Well, imagine what it's like on one of the biggest party days of the year: New Year's Eve. At this celebration, the venue will have three stages offering simultaneous performances, featuring 70 local artists in total, throughout the night. Fancy Ray McCloney serves as toastmaster, with a guest list that includes puppeteers, aerialists, drag and burlesque artists, and live bands. The evening's theme, "Capital City," is a nod to *The Hunger Games*' capital city, Panem, a place known for its over-the-top excesses. Pull together your most fabulous future dystopia outfit (or just look as stunning as possible), and gear up for the party of the year in our capital city, St. Paul. Find tickets and more info at www.cancanwonderland.com. 21+. 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$40; \$70 VIP. 755 Prior Ave. N., Ste. 4, St. Paul; 651-925-2261. —SHEILA REGAN

NYE/THEATER

TIPSY KANGAROO'S NAUGHTY PUPPET REVUE

BRYANT-LAKE BOWL THEATER

The oddities of a standard New Year's Eve party have nothing on the madcap scenes unleashed by Tipsy Kangaroo's Naughty Puppet Revue. Created by an irreverent crew of accomplished local puppeteers (whose collective résumé includes work for the Muppets and Disney), each Tipsy Kangaroo show is known for infusing improv comedy with live puppetry. To be clear, these particular puppets shouldn't be confused with family-friendly entertainment, as the ribald characters voice profanities with a glee that would

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**NEW YEARS EVE
THROWDOWN**

KITTY CAT KLUB

For those who like their dance nights to have more soul than pop, Hipshaker and Hotpants parties cannot be beat. This New Year's Eve, both groups will be at the Kitty Cat Klub to serve you tunes that are heavy on the bass and rhythm. Expect deep cuts and anthems from soul, funk, R&B, and Latin genres through the decades. The bar will flow with drinks, and the dance floor will come alive as DJs Ben Mena, George Rodriguez, Greg Waletski, and Brian Engel spin songs to help count down to 2019. 21+. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$15. 315 14th Ave. SE, Minneapolis; 612-331-9800.

—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER



GETTY IMAGES

traumatize their more wholesome polyfoam cousins. Equally distinctive is Tipsy Kangaroo's eagerness to direct attention behind the curtain, putting the spotlight on the puppeteers as they skillfully animate characters created by the Puppet Forge, a Minnesota company. The crew will respond to prompts from the audience, and the interactive appeal is heightened by the way Tipsy Kangaroo films the performance, screening the framed display on a monitor during the show. In this way, audiences can watch the "televised" results alongside the puppeteers in action. 16+. 10 p.m. \$15. 810 W. Lake St., Minneapolis; 612-825-3737. —BRAD RICHASON

BARHOPPING/NYE

**TOTALLY TUBULAR
'80S NEW YEAR'S EVE**

SOCIAL CIDER WERKS

This New Year's Eve, Sociable Cider Werks will dim the overhead lights, plug in the neons, and crank up some serious '80s jams all night long. It will be totally tubular. Like, to the max. While New Year's might mean champagne for traditionalists, don't forget that a dry cider provides a similar profile and is nearly just as bubbly. So "Rock the Casbah" with some '80s dance moves, and show up in your best looks from the era (or whatever clothing you feel fits your mood). To toast the new year, Sociable will give everyone a complimentary Freewheeler, and expect specialty ciders on tap with food by Union Kitchen. If you're a fan of Tom Cruise, Patrick Swayze, Wham!, and Cyndi Lauper, this is the event for you. Another bonus: There's plenty of free parking in the lot outside, and the cidery welcomes revelers to leave their cars

there overnight. 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Free. 1500 Fillmore St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-758-0105. —LOREN GREEN

NYE/PARTY

**FLIP PHONE:
SPICE UP YOUR NEW YEAR**

AMSTERDAM BAR AND HALL

You might know Flip Phone for its epic dance parties. Or you might know the group for its glam drag nights. This New Year's Eve, Flip Phone will throw a party featuring both of these things in downtown St. Paul. As we wait for the future, this happening will celebrate the past, serving up a heavy dose of the Spice Girls. Other fab and fun bops from the top 40 will be blasted too, thanks to DJ Izzie P. A few drag artists will be showing up for pop-up performances to get you pumped for the new year, and Amsterdam will be serving pints, cocktails, and more leading up to the midnight countdown. 21+. 9 p.m. \$15. 6 W. Sixth St., St. Paul; 612-285-3112. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

DANCE NIGHTS/NYE

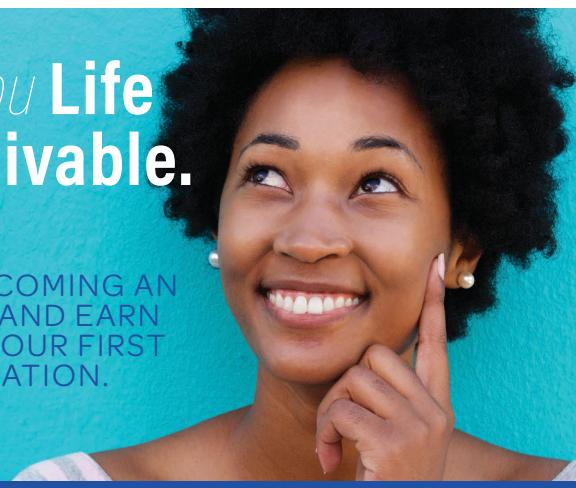
**TRANSMISSION PRESENTS:
'80S PROM**

FIRST AVENUE

This New Year's Eve, Transmission goes all in for the '80s at the First Avenue dance night. No corner of the decade will go unspun, as DJ Jake Rudh plans a mix featuring top 40 (Madonna! U2! Cyndi Lauper! George Michael!), R&B (Prince! Chaka Khan!), goth (The Cure! Siouxsie & the Banshees!), and even hits from iconic soundtracks (*Footloose!* *Top Gun!*). Looks from the era are encouraged, and a photographer will be on hand to capture the glamour. 18+. 9 p.m. \$20. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

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FILM

SPOILED FISH

Aquaman is very, very bad



WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT INC.

BY TONY LIBERA

There's something rotten in the state of Atlantis—and it ain't the fish people of the Fisherman Kingdom. Folks! *Aquaman* flat-out stinks.

If you've seen any other, uh, "films" in the DC Extended Universe, this probably isn't a surprise. While Disney/Marvel churns out bangers with superhuman ease, the folks at Warner Bros. appear totally unconcerned with making good movies (*Wonder Woman* aside). And when a shit sandwich like *Suicide Squad* grosses almost a billion dollars at the box office, why would they be?

Critics are often accused of pretentiousness when they pan a comic book blockbuster, but trust me when I say that I wanted to like this movie. *Aquaman* has endured decades of weak nerdlinger jokes, and who can help but root for an underdog? Casting Jason Momoa as the Aquatic Ace was a perfect move, as it shed *Super Friends* assumptions in favor of something modern and undeniably badass. And yet....

The most apparent problem with *Aquaman* is just how much stuff the filmmakers crammed into its seemingly endless 143 minutes. It is impossible to summarize this movie concisely, but here goes:

Aquaman opens with Arthur Curry, our eponymous hero, explaining the circumstances of his birth. His parents were star-crossed lovers, his father, Thomas (Temuera Morrison), a lighthouse keeper, his mother, Atlanna (Nicole Kidman), an Atlantean royal. They created a "half-breed" baby, which didn't sit well with Atlantis' king. So Atlanna returns to Atlantis to keep her family safe, promising to one day return at sunrise. Then she's killed.

Flash forward. The Aquababy is an Aquaman. He searches the seven seas for people in distress, like a group of Russian submariners being attacked by a high-tech pirate named David Kane (Yahya Abdul-Mateen II). After thwarting the baddies, saving the crew, and wrecking a nuclear sub, Aquaman dips, refusing to help Kane's pirate dad, who became trapped during their fight. Thus, an archenemy is born.

At the bottom of the ocean, archenemy two is plotting to unite the seven kingdoms of Atlantis. Who's this? None other than Aquaman's half-brother Orm (Patrick Wilson), a full-blooded Atlantean who hates Arthur, humanity, and sensible fashion choices. If Orm can unite the seven, he'll pick up the super-dumb bad-guy title of "Ocean Master" and be able to wage war on humanity. Some of the other Atlanteans aren't too keen on this idea, so they entreat Arthur to return

AQUAMAN
directed by James Wan
now open, area theaters

to Atlantis and claim the throne for himself. While Orm enlists kingdoms to fight for him, Aquaman goes on a quest for an ancient trident that will help him defeat his brother.

There's also a second love story and quite a few flashbacks tying the different plot lines together. *Aquaman* mostly just bounces from scene to scene, with an occasional explosion and some failed attempts at *Thor: Ragnarok*-type humor.

We aren't finished. The movie is riddled with clichés. Future lovers accidentally touching hands in a moment of fear, the bad guy opting for false flags and genocide instead of sharing renewable energy science, the shocking reappearance of—spoiler!—Aquaman's mom, who is repeatedly and emphatically said to be dead. Don't get me started on the issues with the trident quest—that storyline has more holes than a fisherman's net.

The real bummer with *Aquaman* is that underneath its plot and visual excesses lies the foundation for multiple good movies. If only WB hadn't crammed the entire mythology into what could have been the first of many *Aquaman* outings. Chalk this one up as another L for DC. **CP**

THE WOLVES IN WINTER

Jungle's hot ticket returns in January



DAN NORMAN

BY JAY GABLER

Having actual teams of young women who are soccer players come was amazing," says Megan Burns, who plays #46 in the Jungle Theater's production of *The Wolves*. "I like doing this play for girls who get to see themselves."

Director Sarah Rasmussen knew Sarah DeLappe's play was special, and successfully advocated for the Jungle to be granted one of the first productions outside of New York. "Being able to show the commitment we've made to gender parity, producing work by female playwrights, having better representation of women in stories," she says, "I think that went a long way."

The title of the play, which had its initial Jungle run this past spring, is also the moniker of a soccer team of adolescent girls. We meet them on the field during warmups, and the play involves enough actual soccer that the cast got coaching before the opening this past spring.

Fortunately, they've stayed limber, as the show will be returning soon: Starting January 29, the original cast will hit the Southern Theater for a reprise production. Staging a show outside of its Lyn-Lake home base is unusual for the Jungle—the result of facing the kind of problem any theater would like to have. "I love our space so much," says Rasmussen, "but with about 150 seats, we have been bursting at the seams fairly often."

Shelby Rose Richardson, who plays #25, says the play has sparked conversations spanning generations. "The thing I didn't anticipate was that we would have

THE WOLVES

Southern Theater
1420 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis
612-822-7063; January 29–February 17

so many women in the audience saying, 'I wasn't allowed to play sports when I was a teenager,' because it was before Title IX."

Burns remembers two older women who came away thinking the work illustrated how "vicious" girls can be to each other. "Your experience of the play has a lot to do with your own experience in your life," Burns observes. "There's still a lot of internalized misogyny that people carry. I would invite people to see these characters with new eyes."

Much of the production's success is due to its outstanding cast, a dream team of young women actors. "So often they'd all be going up against each other for one mediocre girlfriend or best friend part," laughs Rasmussen. "It's really been great to see them all on stage together."

The cast members have continued to run lines together all year, and Burns says she's excited about how the show has developed, as well as how the actors' relationships have deepened. "We're all really close," she says. "I'm really excited for people who've seen it before to see it again, because it's going to feel a lot richer. Maybe our soccer will even be a little better!"

The show had long waitlists for seats during its first run, a fact Rasmussen cites as a sign that the theater community is eager to embrace work centering on young women's voices. "It felt like a watershed moment for me and, I think, for the Jungle, to say, 'Okay, game on!'" CP

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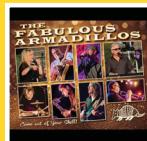
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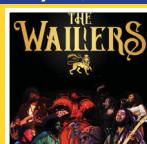


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STREET Style

HELLO WINTER At the Mia on December 20. **BY SAMSON MELKAMU**



MAX MAY
26, ANALYST

What are you wearing?

Tom Ford glasses, archival Raf Simons knitted sweater, vintage Burberry button-up, Helmut Lang denim jacket, vintage belt, Nordstrom dress pants, and Ferragamo loafers.

Describe your style:

Vintage prep meets 2020 underground.

What style trend do you hope gets left behind in 2018?

Tactical chest rigs.

What was your favorite purchase from 2018?

The sweater I'm wearing right now.



RODNEY ALAN
57, BARISTA

What are you wearing?

Side-zipped black pants from Jaclyn Smith, vintage thrifted scarf, black sneakers by Ben Sherman, and faux fur Alpine Studio Jacket.

Describe your style:

Androgynous, vintage with a splash of color, and patterns, patterns, patterns.

What style trend are you hoping stays for 2019?

I wear what makes me feel good and don't follow trends, so I hope authenticity.

Your best style advice:

Wear what makes you feel good.



YIONE HOLLINS
27, SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSISTANT

What are you wearing?

Target floral blazer, Torrid jeans, Route 21 velvet boots.

Describe your style:

Comfortable, convenient, sultry biker.

What style trend do you hope gets left behind in 2018?

Chokers. I cannot wear them anymore.

Who is your biggest style icon?

I love Grace Jones; her style feels so effortless.

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Jan 5 . . . Rad Owl LP Release Show
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Jan 6 . . . BPM Beat Battle
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Jan 18 . . . 40TF & WRRRC MPLS
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Matinee
Saturday, Dec. 29 // 1 pm
Big (1988)

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Bailey "26" Cogan



GRAHAM GARDNER

SPREADING THEIR WINGS

26 BATS! grow up but stay weird on *Onyx*

BY JARED GOYETTE

Bailey "26" Cogan had a few decisions to make this year. And whatever the lead singer and songwriter for 26 BATS! did, a lot of people in the Minneapolis music scene would be watching closely.

The group's high-energy, Latin-infused, jazz-influenced neo-soul indie rock had already established them as a hot live act. Since forming in 2015, 26 BATS! have pro-

gressed from house shows to late-night sets at the Dakota, and as part of the Kremblems Collective, 26 BATS! are now taking part in a monthlong residency at Icehouse. (Each week during the residency, a different member of the band takes charge, and the name, style, and arrangement of the group changes.)

A rundown of the band's lineup gives you an idea of their range. Warren Thomas Fenzi is a heady, versatile drummer, a

Berklee College of Music grad with a jazz background. His college roommate, Karl Remus, alternates between keyboard and guitar, on which he peels off D'Angelo-influenced R&B licks. Bassist Christian

26 BATS!

album release show
Icehouse in Minneapolis
December 26

Wheeler is a hardcore musicology geek with strong Latin American influences. And classically trained

trumpet player Daniel Chavez cites Poncho Sanchez, Francisco Torres, and Roy Hargrove as his idols.

That conglomeration of influences came together in intriguing ways on 26 BATS!'s 2017 debut album, *Cave Cuts*, but it wasn't clear which of those threads the band and Cogan (who identifies as genderfluid and uses they/them pronouns) would pull on next.

"I feel like with *Cave Cuts* we were jumping around so many different styles, which was important and fundamental to this next project," Cogan explains during an interview near the Bat base in northeast Minneapolis. "It got the spread out and now we're moving toward our own sound, rather than taking and trying new things."

One possible direction: dive deeper into the rambunctious polyrhythms that gave tracks like the sexually frustrated "Teriyaki Sundress" their groove. On that song Cogan rhythmically rolls an "r" on a "prrrrr eh whooo" and Chavez responds with a buttery, trilled echo, while Remus, Fenzi, and Wheeler drive the song forward with an Afro-Latin march.

It was this side of the band that won them the opening slot for Afrobeat star Femi Kuti at the Cedar Cultural Center in July. "26 BATS! seemed like such an obvious fit because they're pulling from all these different genres," says Alana Horton, the Cedar's director of marketing and communications. "But Afrobeat felt like it was in there for us, especially with sort of the complexity of their arrangements and the instrumentation and the big sound with horns—it's kind of jazzy and social and big. And then also just from the music they're creating, the message is very positive. It's about healing and community, which felt like it really aligned with the work that Femi does as an artist."

26 BATS! not only share a musical vibe with Femi and his legendary father, Fela, but have a similar taste in politically confrontational lyrics. The *Cave Cuts* song "Guilty," which addresses the killing of Jamar Clark and the subsequent Fourth

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Dec 30 Doug Otto & Friends
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SUN DEC 30TH

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*7PM

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*7PM

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BRIAN MCKEE

Precinct occupation, features the not-very-subtle chorus, "The whole damn system is guilty as hell."

But if becoming a kind of Minnesotan Antibalas was one option, 26 BATS! could also have opted to emphasize their darker, more rock-driven tracks. "Touch Mai Face," their best-known song in this vein, begins slow, with throbbing bass, then crescendos with Cogan wailing the chorus, "My body, your body, never meant to hurt nobody."

The broad dynamics of "Touch Mai Face" and the sheer physicality of Cogan's performance have made the song a crowd favorite. When 26 BATS! opened for Scrunchies at the Entry in June, Cogan owned every bit of the stage during "Touch Mai Face," jumping, crouching, stomping, and darting from one side to the other. And throughout, Cogan seemed to maintain a relationship with every one of their bandmates, periodically jamming with Remus or Wheeler and making eye contact with Chavez or Fenzi, while also bringing the audience in with a vulnerable warmth.

Cogan's voice is a powerful, versatile instrument, but Cogan is also an empath with a rare ability to find an emotional connection with an audience. By the time they leaned into the audience to deliver the final chorus at the Scrunchies show, a few people in the crowd had started to mosh near the stage, while others just held their hands up or head-banged to the thumping beat. Cogan has the voice of a soul singer, but also knows how to rock out.

The DJ and performer Sarah White, who got to know 26 BATS! when Cogan asked her to open one of their shows, was immediately struck by the singer's stage presence.

"I think the whole band has an interesting and unique swagger, and the chemistry is hypnotic," White says. "And Bailey,

where do I even start? They inspire me by the way they move like water through different realms when they are onstage. Captivating and intertwining, the stars and the underworld. A true gift to experience. Like an electric siren, uninhibited."

But 26 BATS!'s new album, *Onyx*, is neither derivative of Afrobeat nor straight-up rock. At moments on *Cave Cuts*, Cogan's vocal lines would skitter in unexpected directions—off-kilter Bjork-like inflections in a neo-soul song, for example. And while the groove and rock elements are still there, it's these quirky tendencies that *Onyx* more fully embraces.

"That's all to do with me being more comfortable in my own body and knowing myself more and my instrument as well, which is my voice," Cogan explains. "*Cave Cuts* was like shooting in the dark. It's not as focused as *Onyx*. *Onyx* is calculated. We got it tighter. We got it dialed in."

Onyx is short, a very intentional 26 minutes long, with themes of self-love and self-acceptance, as on the single "IM OK." The album was mixed by Medium Zach, the producer behind two of the standout local albums of 2018, the multi-artist collection *Dismembered & Unarmed* and Astralblak's *Seeds*.

While the lyrics are more introspective, the music is still political at heart. "My role in the revolution is to make the fight songs that inspire people to keep going," Cogan says. And, just as importantly, 26 BATS!'s new music, while still warm and soulful, is also just a little weird, much like the person at center stage when the band performs.

"All that weird stuff feels so natural to me because I'm a dweeb—I'm a real weirdo," says Cogan. "When I'm singing soulfully, I'm not thinking, 'I'm going to sing beautifully now.' And when there is that switch, it feels like it's right—and that's me allowing myself to be myself."

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): I suspect that in 2019 you'll be able to blend a knack for creating more stability with an urge to explore and seek greater freedom. How might this unusual confluence be expressed in practical ways? Maybe you'll travel to reconnect with your ancestral roots. Or perhaps a faraway ally or influence will help you feel more at home in the world. It's possible you'll establish a stronger foundation, which will in turn bolster your courage and inspire you to break free of a limitation. What do you think?

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): On the average, a total eclipse of the sun happens every 18 months. And how often is a total solar eclipse visible from a specific location on the planet? Typically, once every 375 years. In 2019, the magic moment will occur on July 2 for people living in Chile and Argentina. But I believe that throughout the coming year, Tauruses all over the world will experience other kinds of rare and wonderful events at a higher rate than usual. Not eclipses, but rather divine interventions: mysterious miracles, catalytic epiphanies, unexpected breakthroughs, and amazing graces. Expect more of the marvelous than you're accustomed to.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "The world's full of people who have stopped listening to themselves," wrote mythologist Joseph Campbell. It's imperative that you NOT be one of those folks. 2019 should be the Year of Listening Deeply to Yourself. That means being on high alert for your inner inklings, your unconscious longings, and the still, small voice at the heart of your destiny. If you do that, you'll discover I'm right when I say that you're smarter than you realize.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): Jackson Pollock is regarded as a pioneer in the technique of drip painting, which involves drizzling and splashing paint on canvases that lie on the floor. It made him famous. But the truth is, Pollock got inspired to pursue what became known as his signature style only after he saw an exhibit by the artist Janet Sobel, who was the real pioneer. I bring this to your attention, because I see 2019 as a year when the Janet Sobel-like aspects of your life will get their due. Overdue appreciation will arrive. Credit you have deserved but haven't fully garnered will finally come your way. You'll be acknowledged and recognized in surprising ways.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): As the crow flies, Wyoming is almost a thousand miles from the Pacific Ocean and more than a thousand miles from the Gulf of Mexico, which is part of the Atlantic Ocean. Now here's a surprise: in the northwest corner of Wyoming, the North Two Ocean Creek divides into two tributaries, one of which ultimately flows to the Pacific and one that reaches the Gulf. So an enterprising fish could conceivably swim from one ocean to the other via this waterway. I propose that we make North Two Ocean Creek your official metaphor for 2019. It will symbolize the turning point you'll be at in your life; it will remind you that you'll have the power to launch an epic journey in one of two directions.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I have come to the conclusion that softening your relationship with perfectionism will be a key assignment in 2019. With this in mind, I offer you observations from wise people who have studied the subject. 1. "The perfect is the enemy of the good." —Voltaire 2. "Perfection is a stick with which to beat the possible." —Rebecca Solnit 3. Perfectionism is "the high-end version of fear." —Elizabeth Gilbert 4. "Nothing is less efficient than perfectionism." —Elizabeth Gilbert 4. "It's better to live your own life imperfectly than to imitate someone else's perfectly." —Elizabeth Gilbert

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Peter Alexeyevich became co-Tsar of Russia. He was 10 years old. His 24-year-old half-sister Sophia had a hole cut in the back of his side of the dual throne. That way she could sit behind him, out of sight, and whisper guidance as he discussed political matters with allies. I'd love it if you could wangle a comparable arrangement for yourself in 2019. Are there wise confidants or mentors or helpers from whom you could draw continuous counsel? Seek them out.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): The body of the violin has two f-shaped holes on either side of the strings. They enable the sound that resonates inside the instrument to be projected outwardly. A thousand years ago, the earliest ancestor of the modern violin had round holes. Later they became half-moons, then c-shaped, and finally evolved into the f-shape. Why the change? Scientific analysis reveals that the modern form allows more air to be pushed out from inside the instrument, thereby producing a more powerful sound. My analysis of your life in 2019 suggests it will be a time to make an upgrade from your metaphorical equivalent of the c-shaped holes to the f-shaped holes. A small shift like that will enable you to generate more power and resonance.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Sagittarian singer-songwriter Sia has achieved great success, garnering nine Grammys and amassing a \$20 million fortune. Among the superstar for whom she has composed hit tunes are Beyoncé, Rihanna, and Flo Rida. But she has also had failures. Top recording artists like Adele and Shakira have commissioned her to write songs for them only to subsequently turn down what she created. In 2016, Sia got sweet revenge. She released an album in which she herself sang many of those rejected songs. It has sold more than two million copies. Do you, too, know what it's like to have your gifts and skills ignored or unused or rebuffed, Sagittarius? If so, the coming months will be an excellent time to express them for your own benefit, as Sia did.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): A typical fluffy white cumulus cloud weighs 216,000 pounds. A dark cumulonimbus storm cloud is 106 million pounds, almost 490 times heavier. Why? Because it's filled with far more water than the white cloud. So which is better, the fluffy cumulus or the stormy cumulonimbus? Neither, of course. We might sometimes prefer the former over the latter because it doesn't darken the sky as much or cause the inconvenience of rain. But the truth is, the cumulonimbus is a blessing: a substantial source of moisture, a gift to growing things. I mention this because I suspect that for you, 2019 will have more metaphorical resemblances to the cumulonimbus than the cumulus.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A hundred years ago, most astronomers thought there was just one galaxy in the universe: our Milky Way. Other models for the structure of the universe were virtually heretical. But in the 1920s, astronomer Edwin Hubble produced research that proved the existence of many more galaxies. Today the estimate is that there are at least 400 billion. I wonder what currently unimaginable possibilities will be obvious to our ancestors a hundred years from now. Likewise, I wonder what currently unforeseen truths will be fully available to you by the end of 2019. My guess: more than in any other previous year of your life.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Author Elizabeth Gilbert offers advice for those who long for a closer relationship with the Supreme Being: "Look for God like a man with his head on fire looks for water." I'll expand that approach so it applies to you when you're in quest of any crucial life-enhancing experience. If you genuinely believe that a particular adventure or relationship or transformation is key to your central purpose, it's not enough to be mildly enthusiastic about it. You really do need to seek your heart's desire in the way people with their heads on fire look for water. Next year will be prime time for you to embody this understanding.

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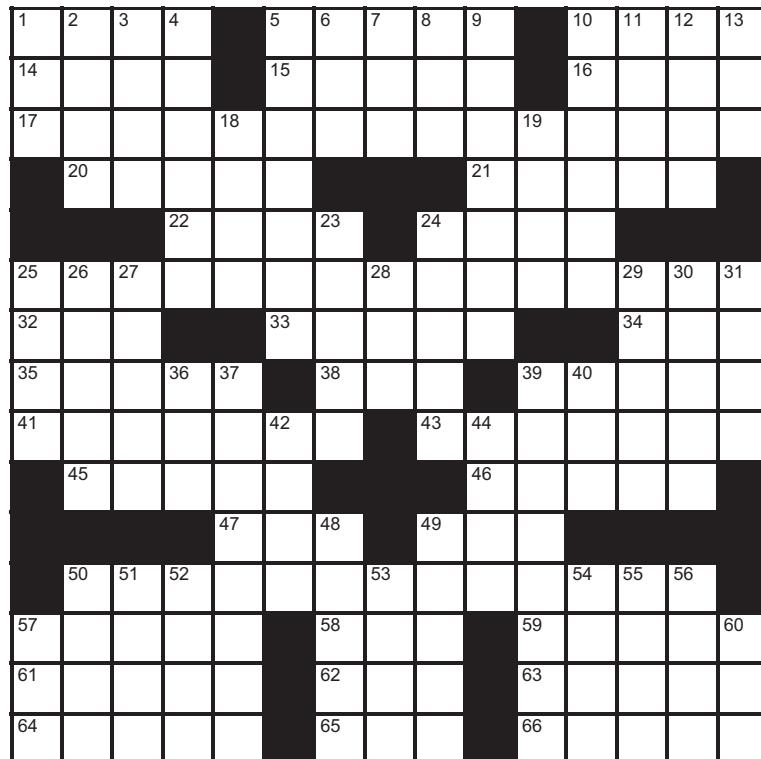
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FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

1 "You got that right"
5 "We outta here!"
10 Car sticker no.
14 Free daycare provider, assuming she lives nearby
15 Scoop holders
16 "Correctamundo"
17 Start of a quip by 43-Across
20 Printer type
21 Avant's opposite
22 On the safe side, on a boat
24 Newman-O's alternative
25 Quip, part 2
32 Place to get a pint
33 Oxen joiners
34 Class with a lab section: Abbr.
35 Let out ____ (sound shocked)
38 Place to take a stand at a party
39 Drum major's prop
41 Quip, part 3
43 Source of the quip
45 Took care of
46 Cold weather home
47 Tree juice
49 Quick punch
50 End of the quip
57 It's just not done
58 Open grassy field
59 Made a scene?
61 Talent buyer

Down

62 Range of knowledge
63 Charged
64 Doles (out)
65 Some pre-rolls
66 Sink part
1 "While we're on the topic ..."
2 It might be stopped on vacation
3 One-named Irish singer
4 Bahamas' capital
5 ____-cat (coward)
6 Eternity
7 Conclusion
8 "You got that right, pal!"
9 To the extent that
10 "Black ____"
11 Eye disorder
12 Tagus y Douro, e.g.
13 Nittany Lions' sch.
18 "I want, no, NEED to know!"
19 Someone who's a real 0: Abbr.
23 Conjure up
24 Final letter
25 Pampering locales
26 Sci-fi author's accolades
27 Her autobiography is "Becoming"
28 Squeeze (out)
29 "Nyuh-uh!" reply
30 Cheapskate's prefix

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I'm no longer my lover's primary partner. What can I do?



Dan Savage

I'm a thirtysomething straight woman married for 16 years. Eighteen months ago, I met a man and there was an immediate attraction. For the first 15 months of our relationship, I was his primary sexual and intimate partner, as both sex and intimacy were lacking in his marriage. (My husband knew of the relationship from the start and is accepting for the most part.) After my lover's wife found out about me, she suddenly became very responsive to my lover's sexual and emotional needs. My lover has told his wife that he will not let me go. He has also told me that he is not willing to let his wife go. She isn't happy about being in a triad relationship, but she allows him to continue seeing me with limitations. I am no longer his primary sex partner, and I have been relegated to the back seat. He claims to love us both, yet his wife and I both struggle knowing the other exists. Recently while out shopping, my lover asked me to help him pick out a Christmas gift for his wife. I got upset because I am in love with him, and I have made him my priority (over my husband), but I am not his priority. I love this man, and we feel we are soul mates. My lover has said that if we fall apart, he will have to find a new secondary partner because his wife can never give him the soulful fulfillment he needs. Should I continue in this relationship?

SOUL MATE AVOIDS CHOICE KNOWINGLY

You complain about being relegated to the back seat, SMACK, but it's your husband whose existence only comes up in parenthetical asides. You also describe this relationship as a triad when there are four people involved (you, your lover, your lover's wife, and your husband), which technically makes this a quad. And from the sound of things, only one member of this messy quad seems happy—your lover, the guy who refuses to make you a "priority" over his wife.

And while you've convinced yourself that your lover feels as strongly for you

as you do for him—"we feel we are soul mates"—it kindasorta sounds to me like you may be projecting, SMACK. Because in addition to asking you to pick out Christmas gifts for his wife, your lover and alleged soul mate regards you as expendable and replaceable. And he's told you as much: He intends to "find a new secondary partner" if you two part because his wife doesn't "give him the soulful fulfillment he needs." That's not how people talk about their soul mates, and it's certainly not something a guy says to someone he regards as his soul mate. Soul mates are typically told they're special and irreplaceable, but your guy sees you as one of many potential seconds out there, and therefore utterly replaceable.

Here's what you ought to do: You aren't interested in being your lover's secondary partner (nor are you much interested in being your husband's wife), so you'll have to call your lover's bluff. And the only card you have to play—and it's a weak hand (all hands with just one card are)—is to dump your lover unless he leaves his wife for you. Success rests on the outside chance your lover was bluffing when he said he'd replace you, but I suppose it's possible he regards you as the irreplaceable one and only said those hurtful things to make you think he wouldn't choose you when you are the one he would've chosen all along. If it turns out that this was the case, SMACK, you'll wind up with your soul mate... who happens to be kindasorta cruel and manipulative.

Calling your lover's bluff—ending a relationship that, in its current form, brings you no joy—is your only hope of having this guy to yourself. But the likelier outcome is that you'll be left alone (with, um, your husband).

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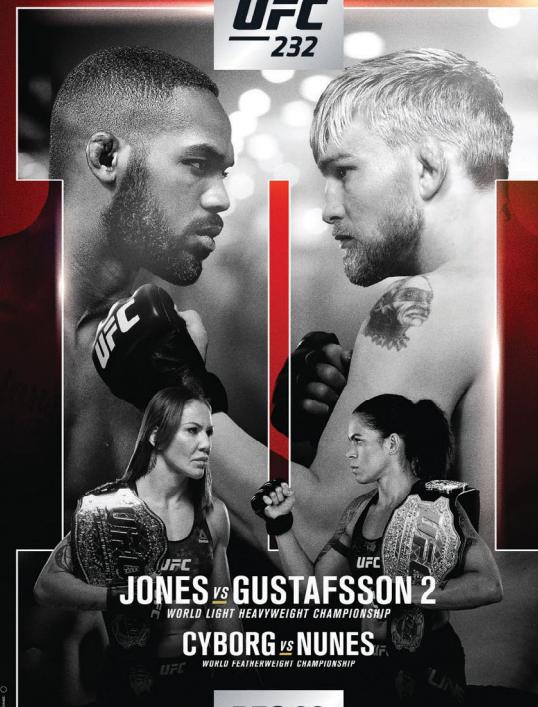

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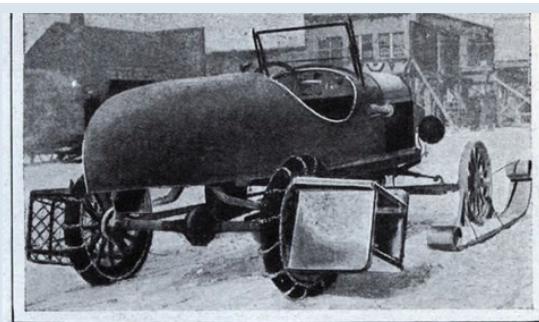
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